

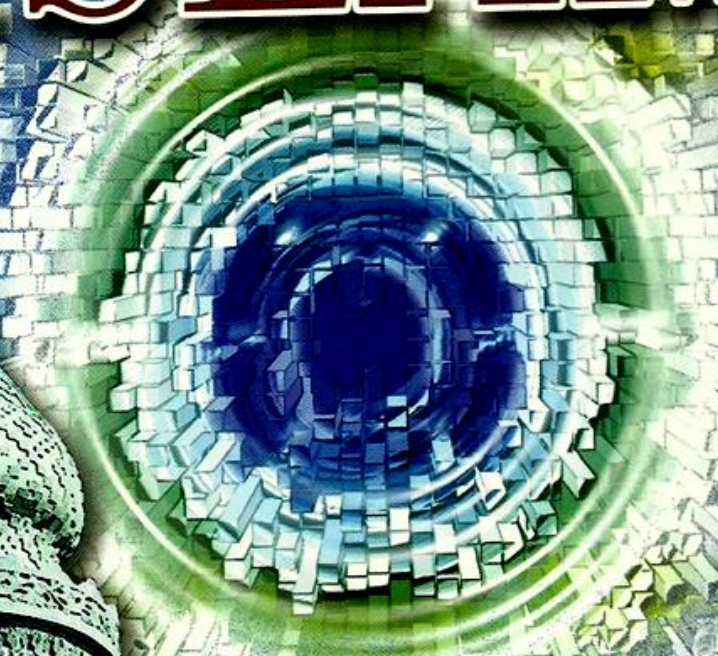


*Photography*

Picture-Making

*&*

**ISLAM**



Majlisul Ulama of South Africa

# Photography Picture-Making & Islam

*Compiled by*  
Majlisul Ulama of South Africa

 ادارہ اشاعت دینیات (پرائیویٹ) لمیٹڈ  
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## Photography, Picture-Making & Islam

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## Contents

	Pages
Introduction	01
The Purpose of the Booklet	06
Why Photograph is not a Picture?	07
The Picture	08
The Photograph	09
The Camera	12
Prohibition Remains with all Means of Production	20
Asbaabul Hurmat of Picture of Animate Objects	22
Ahadith Prohibiting Pictures of Animate Objects	23
The Sahaba and Picture-Making	32
Pictures are the Cause of Idolatry	33
Imitating the Unbelievers	38
Imitation of Allah's Creation of Life	40
The Angels' Abhorrence of Living Pictures	40
Pictures Divert Man's attention from Allah and the Hereafter	41



	Pages
Pictures Agent of Pornography and Obscene "Art"	43
Picture Source of <i>Fakhr</i> (Pride)	44
Pictures Engender <i>Israaf</i> (Waste)	44
Allah Ta'ala Abhors Pictures of Animate Objects	46
The Prohibition was not only for the Time of Rasulullah ﷺ	48
The Abhorrence of Pictures not Restricted to Muslims	61
Westerner's Views on the Prohibition of Pictures	63
Consensus of Opinion of Jurists of Islām on the Prohibition	66
Conclusion	72
The Blasphemy of Pictures	74
Why Pictures of Animate Objects have been Prohibited	82
Opinions of the Ulama on Prohibition Photography	84 86

## Introduction

By way of introduction to this booklet we quote Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Shafi Saheb (*Rahmatullah alaih*) the then Grand Mufti of Pakistan: "In the authentic *Ahadith* it is reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"There will be people in my *Ummat*, who will change the name of wine (giving it some other fancy name) and consume it. And, at these drinking sessions music, singing and dancing will prevail. Allah Ta'ala will cause them to be swallowed into the earth, and others among them will be transformed into apes and swines'."

This practice (of changing the names of forbidden things with a view to legalise them) which our Nabi ﷺ mentioned with regard to wine has today been employed by Muslims, not only for wine, but for many other forbidden practices. Practices which the *Shariah* has proscribed as *Haraam* (prohibited) have today been painted in the colours of modernity and their names have been changed so that people could indulge in these forbidden practices without any



restraint. These people labour under the misconception that they have escaped the Divine Prosecution by employing this self-deceptive trick.

If they had any insight they would have realised that by the employment of this deception they are guilty of two crimes, i.e., (1) the commission of the sin, the name of which they face changed, and (2) being devoid of regret and shame for the crime thus perpetrated. These are such people who are forgetful of repentance.

.....picture-making has been named photography and has thus been declared as lawful..... interest has been named profit, and has thus been legalized.

والى الله المشتكى ولا حول ولا قوة الا بالله العلي العظيم.

(My complaint is lodged with Allah Ta'ala. There is no strength and no power, but with Allah, the Great, the Majestic.)

The subject under discussion is the question of photography. This too is one of the links in that chain. *Shariah* has branded picture-making as an absolute prohibition, and the use of pictures as unlawful. Modern Muslims of today have camouflaged this practice with a new garb. They have turned away from the absolute methods of picture-production and have invented a new method of picture-making, giving it a new name in order to escape the verdicts of Prohibition. In this regard there is not much complaint against the modernists who have been tutored and "nourished" in only modernity. Alas! Our complaint is

against those who not only have knowledge of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, but also venture to criticise sometimes the *Aaimma-e-Mujtahideen* (the great Jurists of Islām) and our pious Predecessors because they labour under the illusion of being experienced and all-wise. They have dubbed picture-making with the term photo-graphy and have issued *Fatwas* (verdicts) of permissibility.....

These (votaries of photography) in support of their claim state:

"It seems that in the present age all the modern *Ulama* of enlightened opinion hold the view that photography is not picture-making, and that the term, *Tasweer* (picture-making) is not applicable to photography."

"Indeed, it is astonishing to note that these very "modern" *Ulama* of "enlightened opinion" who have shrugged off the *Taqleed* of the *Aaimma-e-Mujtahideen* and the Pious Predecessors in consonance with their lowly desires are the very ones who bow their heads in submission to their contemporaries (i.e., those who have issued verdicts declaring photography of animate objects lawful).

The anarchist regards the following (*Taqleed*) of the great Jurists of Islām as a dark blot, and he does not hesitate to portray the opinions of the overwhelming majority of *Fuqahaa* (Jurists) and *Muhadditheen* who include many *Sahabah* (*Radhiyallāhu 'anhum*), as erroneous. It is this type of anarchist who today desires to declare a *Haraam* act as *Halaal* with the aid of the *Fatwas* of a handful of

contemporaries. Indeed, it is most shocking to observe that he will not even consider the opinions of Hazrat Ali ؓ and Hazrat Ibn Abbas ؓ when these do not conform to his (the anarchist's) fancy. But, the verdicts of a handful of contemporaries are accepted by the anarchist when these conform to his desire notwithstanding the existence of the *Fatwas* of thousands of *Ulama* which contradict him."

Shaikh Mustafa Humami (*Rahmatullah alaih*) of Egypt writes:

"The photographers of our time regard picture-making as a great skill and as a branch of the 'fine-arts'.....this means that these people regard picture-making as lawful without any qualms. Now, what does the Law state regarding a person who regards a forbidden practice as lawful, and this too, when he has knowledge of its prohibition? We seek Allah's protection. ....Alas! Muslims today have been encircled by this great evil (of photography) to such an extent that there hardly remains a Muslim home without being full with photos. Ponder! Should Rasulullah ﷺ make an appearance today and observe this evil, what will be his attitude? The great misfortune of the situation is that this *fitnah* (the evil of photography) prevails in those cities where the inhabitants regard themselves to excel in knowledge."

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad whom many regard as an *Alim* of modern and enlightened outlook gave the following reply to a friend who requested his photograph:

"The taking of photographs, the keeping of photographs, and the distributing of photographs are all *Na'jaiz* (forbidden). It was my great error that I took photographs and printed photographs in *Al-Hilal*. I have now repented of this error. My past faults should be concealed and not publicised."

Here it must be noted that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was the editor of the newspaper, *Al-Hilal*, and at one stage he held the view that photography of animate objects was permissible. However, by the Grace of Allah the Maulana was blessed with guidance with the result that he retracted his former opinion.

Hazrat Maulana Sayed Sulaiman Nadvi (*Rahmatullah alaih*) wrote an article claiming that photographs of living creatures were permissible. In reply to his article Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Shafi Saheb, the then Grand Mufti of Pakistan published a booklet, *At-Tasweer Li-Ahkaam-it-Tasweer* wherein it was established beyond the slightest shred of doubt that photography of animate objects is totally forbidden in Islām. Later, Maulana Sulaiman Nadvi Saheb retracted his earlier views and sided with the true and authoritative *Ulama* in declaring that photography of animate objects is forbidden.

### The Purpose of the Booklet

In this article it is our intention to discuss and elaborate the Islāmīc Law regarding the prohibition of photos or pictures of animate objects or pictures of human beings and animals.

There exists many people among us who have been dazzled and confused by scientific and technological progress. Science has buffeted them into blind submission to their "god of science and materialism". Their subservience to the demon of technology has compelled them to beat, batter, distort and mould the Laws of Allah to conform to the inordinate desires and dictates of their scientific masters who are chiefly the atheistic scientists and technological experts.

The ungodly scientists have drummed into these Muslim protagonists of photography that photography is progress, art and culture.

Misguided and misled Muslims have responded to the *Shaitanic* call of the atheists and materialists by compromising the Truth—by casting overboard the teachings of our Nabi ﷺ pertaining to the evil of pictures. In so doing these votaries of picture have been forced to adopt the vile method of interpreting away the Sacred Law of Allah. For those who thus attempt to legalise the prohibitions of Allah Ta'ala, we say:

لَا تَشْتَرُوا بِإِيْنِي كَمَّا قَلِيلًا

"Sell not My laws for a miserable price." (i.e., Do not strike a miserable bargain with My Laws).

We say to them, in the words of Allah:

لَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

("Do not cover the Truth with falsehood, and do not conceal the Truth, while you know.")

Unto those who preach the permissibility of pictures, we say (in the words of Allah):

هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

("Bring forth your proof, if, indeed you are truthful.")

Again, we say to them, in the words of Allah:

أَلَمْ حَكَمَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةُ يَبْغُونَ

("What! Do you desire the law of ignorance?.....")

### Why Photograph is not a Picture?

The modernist Muslim and the so-called modern *A'alim* claim that photography of animate objects is permissible as far as Islāmīc Law is concerned. This claim pivots on another claim, viz., a *photograph is not a picture*. They assert that



photography cannot be described as picture-making (*Tasweer*) which has been banned in the *Ahadith* of our Nabi ﷺ. They further state that a photo is not a picture, but, it is a reflection similar to the reflected image in a mirror or in water or on any polished surface.

The aforementioned claim is the main basis upon which rests the "legality" and the "permissibility" of photography advanced by the votaries of this practice. This is their strongest argument. For this reason we shall proceed, firstly, to devastate and demolish this absurd argument — once and for all. Once the veil has been torn from the face of this deceptive argument the task of understanding the Islāmic ban on pictures will be rendered easier for those who have been unwittingly caught in this trap.

By the grace of Allah Ta'ala we shall conclusively prove that a photo is in reality a picture, and that photography is only one of the *means* of picture-production.

### The Picture

The modern English-Arabic Dictionary, *Al-Mawrid*, defines "Picture" as "*Surat*" (صورة). The same Dictionary defines,

- a) "picture-book" as "*kitabun moesaw-wir*" (كتاب مصور),
- b) "picture-card" as "*al-waraqatal moesaw-waratu*" (الورقة المصورة),

- c) "picture-gallery" as "*Mae'rid-us-Soer*" (معرض الصور),
- d) "picture-writing" as "*al-kitaabatul-taswee-ri-yiah*" (الكتابة التصويرية).

The English-Arabic Dictionary, *Al-Qamoosul Asriyya*, defines the term, "Picture" as "*Surat*" — (صورة).

Wortabet's Arabic-English Dictionary describes the Arabic term, "*Surat*" (صورة) as "Picture", "figure", "image".

The same dictionary describes,

- a) "*Tasweer*" (تصوير) as "Picture, image", and give the plural of "*Tasweer*" (تصوير) as "*Tasaa-weer*" (تصاوير),
- b) "*Moesaw-wirun*" (مصوّر) as "Sculptor, Painter".

The Oxford Dictionary gives the following definition of the term, "picture":

"a representation of something produced on a surface by painting or other means".

The Reader's Digest Great Encyclopaedic Dictionary describes the term, "picture" as follows:

"Painting, drawing of objects especially as work of art; Portrait,—cinematograph picture or film,"

### The Photograph

The Arabic Dictionary, *Al-Mawrid*, describes the term, "Photo", as:

- a) "Suratu-fotughraa-fiyah" (صورة فوتوغرافية), (i.e., photographic picture).
- b) "Yusaw-warū ow yutasaw-warū fotoghraa-fiyān" (يصور أو يتصور فوتوغرافياً), (i.e., Making pictures by way of photography).

The same Dictionary describes the term,

- (a) "photo-flash" as:

مصباح و مضي كهربائي للتصوير.

(i.e., an electric-flash for the purpose of picture-making).

- b) "photograph" as "suratun-dhou-iyah" (صورة ضوئية). (i.e., a light-picture or a picture made by means of the action of light).
- c) "photographer" as "al-moesaw-wirudh-dhou-iyah" (المصور الضوئي). (i.e., one who makes pictures with the aid of light).
- d) "photography" as "at-tasweerudh-dhou-iyah" (التصوير الضوئي). (i.e., picture-making with light).

The Arabic Dictionary, *Al-Qamusul Asriyya*, defines:

- a) "photo" as "suratun-dhou-iyatun" (صورة ضوئية), "tasweer-un-shamsiy-yun" (تصوير شمسي). (i.e., a light-picture or picture made by the aid of light).
- b) "photograph" as "suratun shamsiy-yiah" (صورة شمسية).
- c) "photographer" as "moesaw-wirun dhou-iyun" (مصور ضوئي). (i.e., a picture-maker with the aid of light).

This Dictionary in describing the term, "photo", states:

صَوَّرَ بالفوتوغرافية

(Saw-wara bil-fotu-ghraafiyaa), which means:

He made a picture by means of photography.

The Oxford dictionary defines the term, "photograph" as follows:

"a picture taken by means of the chemical action of light on a sensitive film".

The Reader's Digest Great Encyclopaedic Dictionary defines "photograph" as follows.

"Picture, likeness, taken by means of the chemical action of light on a sensitive film super-imposed on glass, paper, celluloid, metal, etc."

The same Dictionary describes the term, "photo-chemical" as:

"pertaining to the production of Pictures by mechanical printing to form a photographic plate."

The Home University Encyclopedia defines "photography" as follows:

"Photography is the art of preparing permanent representations of objects by means of the light they emit or transmit".

The foregoing quotations establish beyond any shadow of doubt that a photograph is a picture, and that

photography is in fact a means, a way or a method of producing pictures. It has also been proved that the Arabic terms, *surat*, *tasweer*, *tasaaweer* (صورة - تصوير - تصاویر) mean "picture". And, these (i.e., *surat*, *tasweer* and *tasaaweer* — (صورة - تصوير - تصاویر)) are the precise terms used by our Nabi ﷺ in the *Ahadith* prohibiting this practice of picture-making. This could be ascertained by reference to the *Ahadith* of Rasulullah ﷺ which appear elsewhere in this book.

### The Camera

The Camera is the instrument used for the production of the photo-picture or the photograph, hence we feel it necessary to explain the functioning of this instrument in order to further convince the unprejudiced Muslim that a photograph is in reality a picture and not a mere reflection as asserted by the legalisers of this un-Islāmic practice.

The Reader's Digest Great Encyclopaedic Dictionary defines the Camera as follows:

"Apparatus for taking photographs, consisting essentially of a box holding at one end a plate or film which is sensitised so as to *retain the image* projected through a lens at the other." (N.B. the *retention* of the image renders it a picture.

About the Camera, the Encyclopedia International states:

"The first image-viewing device was the camera obscura, but it did not record a picture. The cameras for the daguerro type process were the first successful image-recording devices."

"The first camera for taking pictures instantaneously was the binocular stereoscopic camera introduced in 1856. In the same year Thomas Skaife produced the pistol camera for single pictures."

"Basically, all cameras are the same; light entering through a small hole in an otherwise light-sealed box records an image on a photosensitive film placed opposite the hole....."

"The basic function of the lens on a camera is to produce sharp image on the film.....In general the test of a lens the pictures it produces."

"Photographic film is a light sensitive material used in a camera to record the image being photographed. In the presence of light — the form of electromagnetic radiation most commonly used to expose film — a chemical change takes place to produce an invisible image brought into view by developing." "The emulsion then reacts under the influence of the developer to liberate pure metallic silver that forms the image seen on the negative."

The Encyclopedia International further states:



"After the film has been exposed, it is removed from the camera and taken to the darkroom for processing. Here two things happen;

- 1) the film is developed, so that a negative is produced, and
- 2) the negative is exposed on a piece of photo-graphic paper, which is processed to make a photograph."

"....the basic chemicals are film developer, paper developer, short stop and acid fixer."

"William Henry Fox Talbot, an English scientist, independently conceived the idea of recording the camera's image with light-sensitive paper."

".....Both processes, in the hands of artists, produced pictures of great beauty..... and Among the hundreds of calotypes made in Edinburgh before 1848 by David Octavus Hill and Robert Adamson are some of the finest portraits ever made with a camera.

The two techniques became absolute, however, shortly after 1851, when Frederick Scott Archer, an English sculptor, invented a way of making negatives upon glass."

"Stieglitz edited and published 'Camera Work', a handsome periodical. He produced superb photographs and encouraged exhibitions. With Edward Steichen he founded, in 1902, the Photo-Session, an influential society of dedicated

photographers who dared present their pictures as art. In their drive for recognition they often sought effects of paintings."

"The pictures are made one at a time, and if the camera is not focussed properly or is not held steady, the movies will be blurred or jumpy."

The Home University Encyclopedia says about the camera:

"The camera in which the image is impressed on the sensitive surface is a light-tight box in which the plate is fixed in such a position that the image of the object to be photographed is projected on to it by a lens or pinhole. Development is generally out in a 'dark room' lighted by rays that do not appreciably affect the plate — such as red light for ordinary plates — and is carried on until an image of sufficient density is obtained. The image is then fixed by immersing it in a solution of sodium hyposulphate. Prints are then obtained from the negative by placing it in front of a piece of sensitised paper and exposing to light. The light passes through the negative most readily in the clearer portions, thus darkening the paper most at the places where little light fell on the plate when in the camera, and hence reproducing the shadows of the object."

The following points emerge from the foregoing discussion on the Camera:

- 1) The Camera is not a mere image-viewing device like the mirror.
- 2) The very first camera invented could not record the image so as to render it into a picture. It could only view the object.
- 3) Now all cameras are picture-recording devices.
- 4) The experts and the scientists are agreed on the fact that the camera produces Pictures and not reflections. There is no difference of opinion among the experts and scientists as regards the final product of the Camera. All the unanimous in claiming that the Camera produces Pictures.
- 5) The image of the object projected through the camera-lens is retained and impressed on the plate or film which is sensitised. The image thus retained is not a temporary phenomenon like a reflection, but is a permanent Picture.
- 6) The final emergence of the photo-picture is not dependent upon the presence of the object which was photographed, whereas the image in the mirror is totally dependent upon the presence of the object for its existence. With the passing of the object from the presence of the mirror is the passing of the mirror-image into non-existence. This is not the case with the image produced on the photograph.
- 7) Various materials and chemicals are used in order to produce the final result on the photograph. The image which is recorded on the film is developed

- into the final Picture which is a permanent representation on a surface. This clearly proves that the image on the photo-paper is a Picture which has been produced by chemical means. On the other hand the image of reflection is not produced by any chemical means; it is a natural reflection is not produced by any chemical means; it is a natural phenomenon which does not require any manufacturing process.
- 8) The camera is an apparatus which reproduces the recorded image which is later developed into the Picture seen on the photograph.

It was necessary to dilate on this subject in the aforementioned manner, i.e., in the manner of the "scientific masters" of the protagonists of photography — so as to dispel and clarify the confusion which they (the Muslim modernists) are endeavouring to create. They attempt to confuse the general Muslim public by their absurd assertion that a photograph is not a picture, that the Arabic terms, "surat" (صورة), "tasweer" (تصوير), "tasaweer" (تصاویر) used by our Nabi ﷺ do not apply to photography and photograph. They attempt to bamboozle and mislead innocent and unwary Muslims by alleging that a photograph is not a Picture ("surat" – صورة), but it is a mere reflection of the object, similar to the image in a mirror. Thus, they argue:

"If photography of animate objects be declared unlawful, the image in the mirror should be declared likewise, forbidden. But, since the image

in the mirror is lawful, the image on the photograph is also lawful."

This comparison is absurd to the extreme. It is indeed beyond one's comprehension. How can possible for an intelligent person to assert that the photograph is a mere reflection? Let these false preachers refer to their "scientific masters" to learn the meaning of the term, "reflection". Let them ask their "masters" if the photograph is a picture or a reflection. We briefly sum up the differences between the mirror-image and the photo-image:

- 1) The basic difference between the mirror-image and the image on the photograph is that the mirror-image is a Reflection of the object which stands in its presence. All unprejudiced and sane people will concede this indisputable fact. On the other hand the image on the photograph is a permanent Picture and not a mere reflection dependent upon the perpetual presence of the object for its existence.

Study the Camera, and study the statements of the experts on the camera (i.e., the atheistic scientists), and you will realise that the image of the photograph is a real picture (صورة فوتوغرافية) and not a mere reflection. The definition of a picture (i.e., a permanent representation of the image of the object) does not fit a reflection. A reflection or the mirror-image is not defined as a "picture", but a photograph is defined and described by all and sundry as a "Picture" (صورة), which is a permanent representation of an image or form.

- 2) Another difference is that a mirror is an instrument used for an entirely different purpose. At no time has the mirror been responsible for the evil practices of idolatry, pornography, cinema, etc. The image of the mirror just does not endure to tell the tale of idolatry and evil. Whereas the photograph can and has led to the greater part of today's vice and immorality.
- 3) Mirrors existed during the time of Rasulullah ﷺ. Again, the reflected image in water is not a phenomenon of the twentieth century. All these types of reflected images existed during the time of our Nabi ﷺ, but, He ﷺ never condemned them nor branded them as unlawful. On the other hand, Rasulullah ﷺ condemned most emphatically and rejected categorically Pictures of animate objects.

For these reasons it is either gross ignorance or deliberate falsification of the Truth to allege that the image on the photograph is a reflection and not a picture.

Furthermore, it must be said that this phenomenon of reflection is used in the camera as a means towards the production of the picture. This is similar to a person drawing a picture of an object by viewing the reflected image of the object in a mirror. So, if a painter paints a picture by looking at the image of the object in a mirror, the drawn picture will still be rendered prohibited and not the image in the mirror. The reflection in the mirror was used as an aid for the drawing of this picture, but the picture thus produced and the reflected image of the object in the mirror are two



distinct and different things. Similarly, the picture produced on the photo-paper with the aid of reflection is a Picture and thus forbidden.

### Prohibition remains with all Means of Production

It must be clearly understood that our Nabi ﷺ declared the picture (*surat*, صورة *tasweer* — تصوير) as unlawful, and not the means of producing the picture. Even during the time of Rasulullah ﷺ there existed various ways of producing images, e.g., carving, drawing, painting, etc., but our Nabi ﷺ never referred to the method of image-production. Nabi ﷺ directly banned the Picture.

According to the Oxford Dictionary the definition of a photograph is given as:

"a picture taken by means of the chemical action of light on a sensitive film."

And, this Dictionary defines a picture as:

"a representation of something produced on a surface by painting or others means."

From this definition it will emerge that there are various means of producing a picture. It does not follow that a picture ceases to be a picture if the means of production changes from one method to another. The supporters of photography can argue this question from any angle whatsoever, but it will remain as clear as daylight that a photograph is a picture

(صورة). The only difference in the photo-picture and the painted picture in so far as the definition of the Picture goes, is in method of production. But, regardless of this difference in means of production, a picture remains a picture even though it may be dubbed any fancy name so as to wriggle out of the confines of Divine Prosecution.

Now according to the Oxford Dictionary there are various means of producing a picture. The following are some of the means of producing pictures:

Painting, drawing, caricature, indenting, tracing, pricking, cloisonism, collage, contour, dry-point, mezzotint, wood-cut, lino-cut, lithography, silver-point, photo-engraving, intaglio, motage, pointillism, repouse, graffition, mosaic, photography, etc.....

The above mentioned are some of the means of producing pictures, Islām is not interested in the method used. The prohibition is directed to the picture formed. If any of these methods or any other technique yet to be invented, is used to be produce a picture of an animate object, then it will be a picture (صورة-تصوير) — plain and simple to understand — and as such will fall under the Islāmic Prohibition of Pictures of living organisms.

Should science bring into existence such a "mirror" which will retain the image even after removal of the object from its presence, then, undoubtedly this retained image will cease to be a mere reflection, and the definition of picture will apply to it by virtue of it being a permanent representation on a surface of the image of the object.

With regard to the reasoning in which the photo-picture is compared to the mirror-reflection, Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Shafi Saheb (*Rahmatullah alaih*), the then Grand Mufti of Pakistan, states:

"If one ponders a little one will realise that this reasoning is totally opposed to the principles of *Qiyaas* (Analogical Reasoning), hence, it does not befit the high dignity of an *A'alim* to display inability to distinguish between such things of clear and open difference, and then, apply the laws of the one to the other." (*Aalaate Jadidah*)

*Alhamdulillah!* By the Grace of Allah Ta'ala we have conclusively proved that a photograph is a picture (*صورة-تصوير*). Let us now deal with the factors which are responsible for the prohibition of pictures of animate objects.

### Asbaabul Hurmat of Picture of Animate Objects

There are a number of *Asbaabul Hurmat* (or Factors which render a practice as unlawful) this practice of Picture-Making. These are as follows:

- 1) The *Ahadith* of our Nabi ﷺ emphatically condemn and prohibit picture-making and pictures.
- 2) Pictures of living creatures are the root cause of idolatry.

- 3) *Tashab-buh bil-Kuffar* or imitation of the unbelievers.
- 4) *Tashab-buh bi-khalqil-lah* or imitation of Allah's creation of life.
- 5) The *Mala'ikah* (Angels) of *Rahmat* abhor pictures of animate objects.
- 6) Pictures divert man's attention from Allah and the Hereafter.
- 7) Pictures — a powerful agent for pornography and obscene "art".
- 8) Pictures — a source of *fakhr* (pride).
- 9) Pictures engender *Israaf* (waste).
- 10) Allah Ta'ala abhors pictures of animate objects.

### Ahadith Prohibiting Pictures of Animate Objects

- 1) Abu Talha ؓ narrates: "Nabi ﷺ said: "The Angels do not enter a house wherein there is a dog or pictures (*تصاویر*)."  
(*Bukhari and Muslim*)

N.B.:— Refer to the Arabic Text appearing elsewhere in this booklet and note that our Nabi ﷺ uses the term, *Tasaaweer* (*تصاویر*) for pictures.

- 2) Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud ؓ narrates: "I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying: "The picture makers will be punished most severely by Allah'."  
(*Bukhari and Muslim*)

N.B.:— In this *Hadith* Rasulullah ﷺ uses the term, *Al-Musawwirun* (المصوّرون) for picture-makers.

- 3) Ibn Abbas ؓ narrates on the authority of Hazrat Maimunah (*Radhiyallāhu 'anha*): "Verily, Rasulullah ﷺ arose one morning in a state of disress. And, he said: 'Verily, Jibrael ؑ promised to meet me last night, but, he never met me. I take oath by Allah that he never broke a promise with me'."

Rasulullah ﷺ then realised that there was a puppy dog under the bed. He ordered the dog to be removed, and it was expelled. He, then, flushed water on the place where the dog was. During the afternoon Jibrael ؑ met Rasulullah ﷺ. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ, then said: 'Verily, you promised to meet me last night'."

Jibrael ؑ replied: 'Yes. But we do not enter a home wherein there is a dog or a picture.'

Nabi ﷺ then ordered that dogs be killed. Even watchdogs of small orchards were ordered to be killed, but, watchdogs of large orchards were exempted." (*Muslim*)

N.B.:— The term used in this *Hadith* for picture is *Surat* (صورة).

- 4) Hazrat A'isha (*Radhiyallāhu 'anha*) narrates: "Verily, Nabi ﷺ did not leave anything in his home which had pictures on it, but broke it." (*Bukhari*)

N.B.:— The word in this *Hadith* for pictures is *Tasaaleeb* (تصاليب). The *Fuqahaa* state that in the context of the *Hadith* this term also means pictures.

- 5) Hazrat A'isha (*Radhiyallāhu 'anha*) narrates: "Verily, she purchased a cushion which had pictures on it. When Rasulullah ﷺ saw it he stood in the entrance and did not enter. I discerned displeasure on his face, and I said: 'O Messenger of Allah ﷺ! I repent towards Allah and His Messenger. What sin have I committed?'

Rasulullah ﷺ said: 'What is this cushion?'

I [A'isha (*Radhiyallāhu 'anha*)] said: 'I have purchased it for you to sit on the lean against.'

Rasulullah ﷺ said: 'Verily, the people of these pictures will be punished on the Day of *Qiyamat*. It will be said to them: Give life to that which you have created.'

And Rasulullah ﷺ said: 'Verily, the Angels do not enter a home wherein there are pictures'."

(*Bukhari and Muslim*)

N.B.:— The term, *As-Surat* (الصورة) is used here for pictures.

- 6) Hazrat A'isha (*Radhiyallāhu 'anha*) narrates that she had hung a curtain having pictures on it on the verandah. Nabi ﷺ snatched it off. She then tore it into two and used it as cushions to sit on.

(*Bukhari and Muslim*)

N.B.:— The term, *Tamaatheel* is used here which in the context of the *Hadith* means pictures according to the *Fuqahaa*.



- 7) Hazrat A'isha (Radhiyallāhu 'anha) narrates: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'The severest punished persons on the Day of Qiyamah will be those who imitated the creation of Allah.'" (Bukhari and Muslim)
- 8) Ibn Abbas ؓ narrates: "I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying: 'Every picture-maker will be in the Fire. A life will be created for every picture the picture-maker made, and he will be tortured in Hell'. If you have to make pictures [says Ibn Abbas ؓ then make a picture of a tree or such things which are inanimate.'" (Bukhari and Muslim)
- 9) Ibn Abbas ؓ narrates: "I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying: 'Whosoever makes a picture will be punished and he will be forced to give life to the picture, and he will not be able to do so.'" (Bukhari)

*N.B.*— In *Hadith* No. 8 the term, *Surat* (صورة) is used and in *Hadith* No. 9, also *Surat* (صورة).

- 10) Ibn Umar ؓ narrates: "Verily, Rasulullah ﷺ said: 'Verily, these people who make these pictures will be punished on the Day of Qiyamah. It will be said unto them: Give life to that which you have created.'" (Bukhari)

*N.B.*— The term, *As-Suwar* (الصور) is used here for pictures.

- 11) Abu Zur'ah ؓ said: "I entered with Abu Hurairah ؓ a house in Madinah. Abu Hurairah ؓ saw on top of the house a picture-maker (مصوّر) busy drawing

(pictures). Abu Hurairah ؓ then said: I heard Rasulullah ﷺ saying: that Allah Ta'ala said:

"Who is more unjust than that person who imitates my creation. Let him then create a Grain, and let him create an atom." (Bukhari)

*N.B.*— The term, *Musawwiroon* (مصوّرون) is used here for picture-maker.

*Hadith* No. 7 should be read in conjunction with this *Hadith* No. 11.

- 12) Aon Ibn Juhaifah ؓ narrates on the authority of his father: "Verily, Nabi ﷺ cursed the devourer of interest, the giver of interest, the one who tattoos, the one who desires to be tattooed, and the picture-maker." (Bukhari)

*N.B.*— The term, *Musawwir* is used here for picture-maker.

- 13) Abu Hurairah ؓ narrates: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'On the Day of Qiyamah a neck (i.e., a beast) will emerge with two eyes, two ears and a tongue. This neck will say: I have been appointed over three types of people, every rebellious aggressor, everyone who associated a god with Allah, and, the picture-makers.'" (Tirmizi)

*N.B.*— The term, *Al-Musawwiroon* (المصوّرون) is used here for picture-makers.

- 14) Saeed bin Abil Hasan ؓ narrates: "I was with Ibn Abbas ؓ when a man came to him (Ibn Abbas),

and said: 'I am a person who derive my living from the labour of my hands, and I make these pictures.'

Ibn Abbas ؓ said: 'I shall narrate to you only that which I have heard from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: 'Whoever makes a picture will be punished by Allah. He (the picture-maker) will be ordered to breathe life into the picture, but he will never be able to do so.'

The man's face became pale. Ibn Abbas ؓ said: 'Woe upon you, if you reject. If you have to make pictures, then make pictures of this tree and of all things which do not have in them life.' (Bukhari)

*N.B.*:— The term surat has been used here.

- 15) Hazrat A'isha (Radhiyallāhu 'anha) narrates: "When Nabi ﷺ became ill certain of his wives were discussing about a temple named, Mariyah. Umme Salmah (Radhiyallāhu 'anha) and Umme Habibah (Radhiyallāhu 'anha) had visited Abyssinia and they were describing the beauty of the temple and the pictures in that temple. Rasulallah ﷺ raised his head and said: 'When a pious man among those people dies they erect a place of worship at his grave and then draw in it those pictures. They are the worst of Allah's creation!'" (Bukhari and Muslim)

*N.B.*:— The term, *Tasaweer* has been used in this *Hadith*.

- 16) Ibn Abbas ؓ narrates: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'The severest punished on the Day of Qiyamah will be a person who killed a Nabi or was killed by a Nabi, the person who killed any of his parents, the picture-makers, and an *A'alim* who did not derive benefit from his knowledge.'" (Mishkaatul Masabeeh)

*N.B.*: The term, *Al-Musawwiroon*, is used in this *Hadith* to describe picture-makers.

- 17) Hazrat Jabir ؓ narrates: "Verily, Nabi ﷺ commanded Umar Ibn Khattab (ؓ), during the period of the Conquest (of Makkah) whilst he was in Bathaa', to go to the *Kabah* and destroy every picture therein. Nabi ﷺ did not enter the *Kabah* until every picture was eliminated." (Abu Dawud)

*N.B.*:— The term, *surat* is used in this *Hadith*.

- 18) Hazrat Usamah Zaid ؓ narrates: "Verily, Nabi ﷺ entered the *Kabah* and saw in it a picture. He, then ordered me (Usamah). I brought a bucket of water and destroyed the picture with the water. Nabi ﷺ was saying:

'May Allah destroy those who make pictures of that which they do not create!'"

(Sharhul Ma'anil Aathar of Tahawi)

*N.B.*:— The term, *surat* is used in this *Hadith* for picture.

- 19) Abu Zubair ؓ narrates: "I questioned Jabir ؓ regarding pictures in the room and about a person

who makes these pictures. Jabir ؓ said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ threatened against this."

(*Sharhul Ma'aanil Aathaar of Tahawi*)

**N.B.:**— The term, *suwar* is used here for pictures.

- 20) Ibn Husain narrates: 'Ali bin Abi Talib ؓ said to me: 'I send you on that errand on which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent me, i.e., you leave no picture, but destroy it; leave no high grave but flatten it.'

(*Muslim, Riyadh-us-Saliheen*)

- 21) Hazrat Ali ؓ narrates: "I prepared food and invited Nabi ﷺ. He ﷺ came and entered. He then saw a curtain on which were pictures. Rasulullāh ﷺ then went out (of the house) and said: 'Verily, the Angels do not enter a home in which there are pictures'."

(*Sunan-un-Nisa'*)

**N.B.:**— The term, *Tasaweer* is used in this *Hadith*.

- 22) Jabir ؓ narrates: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ forbade pictures in homes, and He ﷺ forbade making these (pictures)."

(*Tirmizi*)

**N.B.:**— The term, *Surat* is used in this *Hadith*.

- 23) Hazrat A'isha (*Radhiyallāhu 'anha*) narrates: "We had a curtain on which was the picture of a bird. As one entered one would be facing it. Nabi ﷺ said to me:

"Turn it away from me, for verily, whatever I see it, I think of the world...."

(*Muslim*)

**N.B.:**— The term, *Timthaal* is used in this *Hadith* for picture.

- 24) Abu Hurairah ؓ narrates: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Jibraeel ؑ came to me and said: I came to you last night, but, the only thing which prevented me from entering was the presence of pictures on the door, pictures inside the house on a screen and a dog inside the house. Therefore, order the head of the picture on the door to be cut so that it will resemble a tree. And, order that the curtain be cut into two pieces strewn on the floor to be trampled over, and order the dog to be ejected."

Rasulullāh ﷺ ordered as asked for."

(*Tirmizi, Abu Dawud*)

Every true Muslim — every unbiased person will realise from these *Ahadith* of Rasulullāh ﷺ that our Nabi ﷺ was categoric in his rejection and emphatic in his prohibition of this evil and idolatrous practice of manufacturing pictures of living creatures. The sincere Muslim, no matter how unlearned he may be, will immediately realise upon reading these *Ahadith* of our Nabi ﷺ that there is no doubt whatsoever in the validity of the Islāmic prohibition of this practice of photography of animate objects. We have enumerated these *Ahadith* of our Nabi ﷺ to bring to the fore the fraud and the lies of those who attempt to subvert and seduce the Islāmic Prohibition of this un-Islāmic practice.

### The Sahaba and Picture-Making

Like our Nabi ﷺ, his Noble Companions upheld and adhered to Islām's strict prohibition of image-making. The following *Fatwa* (Verdict) issued by Hazrat Ibn Abbas ؓ on picture-making illustrates the view and the practice of the *Sahaba* (*Radhiyallāhu 'anhum*).

Saeed bin Abil Hassan ؓ narrates: "I was with Ibn Abbas ؓ when he came to him (Ibn Abbas ؓ) and said:

"I am with Ibn Abbas ؓ when a man came to him (Ibn Abbas ؓ) and said: "I am a person who derive my living from the labour of my hands, and I make these pictures."

Ibn Abbas ؓ said: "I shall narrate to you only that which I have heard from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"Whoever makes a picture will be punished by Allah. He (the picture-maker) will be ordered to breathe life into the picture, but he will not be able to do so."

The man's face became pale (with fear). Ibn Abbas ؓ said: "Woe upon you, if you reject. If you have to make pictures, then make pictures of this tree and of thing which are lifeless." (Bukhari)

In reply to a question by Abu Zubair ؓ on picture-making Hazrat Jabir ؓ said: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ threatened against this." (Sharh-ul-Ma'anil A'athaar of Thaa'wi)

Hazrat Ali ؓ appointed Ibn Husain ؓ to destroy all pictures. (See Hadith No. 20)

In the *Kitāb, Kanzul A'maal*, the following is reported: "In Syria, Hazrat Umar ؓ turned down an invitation because of the presence of pictures on the premises."

### Picture are the Cause of Idolatry

#### Idolatry

"This term is derived from the Greek terms, 'eidolon' (image) and 'latreia' (service). It means, veneration of idols or other representations of supernatural beings. The idol or image may be either a portrait of the worshipful object or a symbol which stands for it. The idol may be believed to have efficacy as the supernatural being itself or as a visible manifestation of it. However, idolatry is more properly the worship of a representative image of the deity or spirit...."

(Lawrence Krader, American University, Washington,  
Encyclopedia International)

Idolatry, anthropomorphism (the attribution of human form or character to God), and polytheism — all owe their origin to this practice of picture-making. In the Eyes of Allah there is no crime, no sin, no evil greater and more heinous than idolatry. This is a practice which sets up deities in direct opposition to Allah, *Jalle Jalalahu*, Creator and Sovereign of the Universe. The abovementioned definition of idolatry clearly illustrates the elevated pedestal assigned to these

"defied" images, idols and pictures by the followers of *Shaitan*. The severity with which Allah Ta'ala condemns idolatry is born out by the following Qur'ānic verse:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ

"Verily, Allah does not forgive the commission of *Shirk* (polytheism) against Him. But, He forgives whatever is besides this (*Shirk*) for whom He desires."

Thus, the reader will become well aware of the fact that idolatry is the worst of crimes which could ever be perpetrated by the creatures of Allah. There is no vice which Allah Ta'ala so abhors like idolatry and polytheism. This is a sin which is committed in diametric opposition to the Divinity of Allah *Azza wa Jall*. Idolatry negates the purpose — the Sole Purpose — for which man and *Jinn* were created, i.e. Allah's worship. Allah Ta'ala says in the Qur'an:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

"I have not created *Jinn* and Man, but that they worship Me."

The roots of this abomination of idolatry are picture-making. During the period preceding the introduction of idolatry people were misled and trapped by *Shaitaan* into drawing pictures of their Prophets (*Alaihimus Salām*) who had died. With the passing of time new generations slid down further into this evil practice and started to worship and render obeisance to the pictures thus made.

So came into existence idol-worship. Later statues and idols were incorporated into the new religion of idolatry. With regard to the inception of idolatry, Hazrat Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (*Rahmatullah alaih*) states in his *Kitāb, Balagh-ul-Mubeen*:

"According to some (learned people) picture-worshipping started after the demise of the Prophet Sheeth عليه السلام who was the son of Adam عليه السلام. According to others guidance and truth remained even after the demise of Hazrat Sheeth عليه السلام.... After Idrees عليه السلام — who was the grandson of Hazrat Seeth عليه السلام — the people yearned for him. Many people were grieved by the separation of Idrees عليه السلام. At this time, *Shaitaan*, the open and accursed enemy of man, came to these people in human form and said:

"I have seen the beautiful and the gracious form of Hazrat Idrees عليه السلام, and I have great ability in the art of picture-making. If you agree, I shall make a picture of Hazrat Idrees عليه السلام which you may frame in glass and keep it guarded in the privacy of a room above the door. People may then visit this picture (of Hazrat Idrees عليه السلام —).

Thus the picture was made and people filed in for purposes of making vows (in its presence).... "This practice continued among these people until, finally it developed into idolatry and grave-worship."

Right up to the time of our Nabi عليه السلام pictures of Hazrat Ibraheem عليه السلام and Hazrat Ismaeel عليه السلام adorned the *Kabah*. And, even to this day of ours, false pictures of Hazrat Isa عليه السلام — Jesus — are to be found in profusion among the

Christian populace of the world. These pictures are in reality being deified and worshipped. The following *Hadith* of our Nabi ﷺ fully bears out the claim that pictures prepared the ground for idolatry.

Hazrat A'isha (*Radhiyallāhu 'anha*) narrates: "When Nabi ﷺ became ill some of the wives of Nabi were discussing the beauty and the pictures of a certain temple, named Mariah. Umme Salmah (*Radhiyallāhu 'anha*) and Umme Habibah (*Radhiyallāhu 'anha*) had visited Abyssinia (and now describing the temple which they had seen there).

Rasulullah ﷺ raised his head and said: "When a pious man among them died they erected a place of worship at his grave. Thereafter, they made those pictures (i.e., those which Umme Salmah and Umme Habibah (*Radhiyallāhu 'anhuma*) were describing) therein. They are the vilest of Allah's creatures." *(Bukhari, Muslim)*

Hazrat Jabir ﷺ narrates: (i) "Verily, the Nabi ﷺ commanded Hazrat Umar ﷺ during the Conquest of Makkah — at this time Rasulullah ﷺ was in Bathaa' — that he (Umar ﷺ) go to the *Kabah* destroy every picture in it. Nabi ﷺ did not enter the *Kabah* until every picture was destroyed." *(Abu Dawud)*

Usama bin Zaid ﷺ narrates: (ii) "Verily, the Nabi ﷺ entered the *Kabah* and saw in it a picture. Nabi ﷺ commanded me. I, thereupon, brought a pail of water and splashed it on the pictures (washing them off). Nabi ﷺ then said: "May Allah destroy those who makes pictures of that which they are not able to create'." *(Sharh-ul-Ma'anil Aathaar of Tahaawi)*

*(Sharh-ul-Ma'anil Aathaar of Tahaawi)*

N.B.:— There seems to be an apparent "contradiction" between *Hadith* No. (i) and No. (ii). However, there is no real contradiction, for it is quite possible that Hazrat Umar ﷺ accidentally overlooked some pictures when he carried out Rasulullah ﷺ command. These pictures were later seen by Rasulullah ﷺ when he entered the *Kabah*.

Once Nabi ﷺ despatched Hazrat Ali ﷺ to destroy all images, pictures and elevated graves. After this command of Rasulullah ﷺ was carried out, He ﷺ observed:

"He who returns to making any of these things (i.e., images, pictures and elevated graves) has definitely rejected the Law which was revealed to Muhammad ﷺ."

*(Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hambal)*

Hazrat Shah Waliullah Muhaddith (*Rahmatullah alaih*) states in his *Kitāb, Hujjat-ul-Lahil-Baalighah*:

".....indulgence in picture-making opens the door to the worship of idols. In most communities idol-worship started with picture-making."

The following question and answer are recorded in the *Kitāb, Na'ul Mufti Wasa'il*:

Question: Is it permissible to don such clothing having pictures on them?

Answer: It is forbidden. Such a person resembles one who carries idols on his person .... and, hence, it is forbidden to perform *Salāt* wearing such clothing.

"Portrait sculpture originated in Egypt because of the belief that images of the dead aided the soul's survival."



"..... Temple walls are richly adorned with reliefs of gods and worshipping kings (Temple of Seti I, Abydos),....."

"Classic Greek sculpture, throughout its history served religion with statues of gods." (Encyclopedia International)

The foregoing will suffice to illustrate to the seeker of the truth that *idolatry* which Allah Ta'ala so much abhors, was initiated and fostered by the practice of picture-making. Muslims should, therefore, not wonder at the stringent Islāmic ban of pictures.

### Imitating the Unbelievers

The Holy Messenger ﷺ said:

مَنْ تَشَبَهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ

"Whoever imitates a nation becomes of them."

Now this factor of *Tashabuh bil Kuffar* is also one of the reasons which establishes the prohibition of pictures of animate objects. In pictures and picture-making Muslims imitate the *Kuffar* in the following ways:

1. Acceptance of an evil practice initiated by the unbelievers.
2. Use of pictorial decorations and adornment are the ways of the unbelievers.
3. Family snaps, wedding photos, etc., are all exclusive *Kuffaar* practice which Muslims have adopted.

The element of *Tashahahud bil Kuffaar* which pervades the practice of picture-making and photography is responsible for the destruction of many of our good actions. This practice gives rise to pride and show which are ruinous to good actions — Islāmic actions. Our humility and sincerity and preyed upon by this deadly vice of pride which follows in the wake of this practice which we have inherited from the unbelievers. For example, the Muslim who should give charity for the sake of Allah Ta'ala, destroys his charitable acts by endeavouring to seek publicity through the medium of having his photograph taken and published. His very desire to publicise his charitable acts in this un-Islāmic manner renders a death-blow to his eternal *Sawaab* (reward) which Allah Ta'ala has promised him. You will see the publicity-seeking Muslim imitating the unbelievers by relishing in his picture being taken whilst he is handing out a few food hampers to the poor. Photography is an agency of acquiring cheap-publicity — and this, needless to say, is of the ways of the *Kuffaar*. The way of Islām has been summed up by our Nabi ﷺ when He ﷻ said:

"What the right hand gives, the left hand knows not of."

This factor of *Tashabbuh bil Kuffaar*, therefore, negates sincerity, humility and good actions.

### Imitation of Allah's Creation of Life

The presence of the factor of *Tashab-buh bi-Khalqillah* or imitating Allah Ta'ala's creation of life has been spelled out clearly by Allah Ta'ala, Himself, in a *Hadith Qudsi*. Rasulullah ﷺ said that Allah Ta'ala said:

"Who is more unjust than he who imitates my creation. Let him then create a grain, and let him create an atom."  
(Bukhari)

Our Nabi ﷺ has likewise clearly stated that the picture-maker attempts to imitate Allah Ta'ala's attribute of Creative Power. For this very reason our Nabi ﷺ branded the picture-makers as the severest punished on the Day of *Qiyamah*. Refer to *Hadith* No. 7 elsewhere in this booklet. *Hadith* No. 9—11 appearing elsewhere in this booklet lay emphasis on the existence of this element of *Tashab-buh Bi-Khalqillah* in this practice of picture-making. The seeker after the truth must take cognizance of the fact that Allah Ta'ala, Himself has described the picture-maker as the Most-Unjust Person.

### The Angel's Abhorrence of Living Picture

This too is one of the elements for the prohibition of pictures of animate object. In fact, the abhorrence of the *Mala'ikah* (Angels) of *Rahmat* for pictures is so strong that Jibraeel ﷺ refused to enter the home of even our Nabi

ﷺ because there happened to be a picture on the screen inside the house. Our Holy Nabi ﷺ upheld this abhorrence of the *Mala'ikah* by refusing to enter the home of his beloved wife, Hazrat A'isha (*Radhiyallāhu 'anha*) because there was a picture in her house. And, Hazrat Umar ﷺ upheld this abhorrence for pictures which Rasulullah ﷺ displayed, by rejecting an invitation to dinner because of the presence of pictures in the home of the host. And, Imam Zuhri (*Rahmatullah alaih*) upheld this abhorrence for pictures, which the *Mala'ikah*, Rasulullah ﷺ and the Sahabah (*Radhiyallāhu 'anhum*) displayed, by issuing the Verdict that it is not permissible to enter a house adorned with pictures of animate objects. Refers to *Ahadith*, Numbers 1—3, 6, 17 and 21.

### Pictures Divert Man's Attention from Allah and the Hereafter

Art — especially picture-making — renders man oblivious of his Meeting with Allah Ta'ala. This practice of picture-making causes man to neglect his duties to Allah and other creatures. Indulgence in picture-making is a "drug". Hours, days, months and even years of the picture-maker's or the sculptor's life are squandered in this futile and evil practice of image-making. The image-maker lives only for his images and for the manifestation of his ego which projects itself in his pictures and images.

Notorious characters like Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Della Robias, Lorenzo, Donatello and the myriad of other

image-makers wasted their lives in this *Shaitanic* and idolatrous pursuit.

A Muslim cannot afford to be diverted from the remembrance of his Creator. And, if there is anything which diverts man from Allah and the Hereafter, it is picture-making. Our Nabi (*Sallallāhu 'alaihi wasallam*)'s statement will suffice to substantiate this claim. The following *Hadith* reveals this power of pictures to divert one's attention from Allah.

Hazrat A'isha (*Radhiyallāhu 'anha*) narrates: "We had a curtain on which was the picture of a bird.... Nabi ﷺ said: 'Turn it away from me, for verily, whenever I see it, I think of the world'...." (Muslim)

In the above-quoted *Hadith* our Nabi ﷺ makes it quite clear that pictures engross one's attention with the world, thus diverting the believer's attention from Allah Ta'ala.

If picture making was permitted in Islām under the subterfuge of "art" then there would have been many a Muslim "Michelangelo" and "Rembrandt" who would have squandered their lives as well as the lives of others in this idolatrous practice which diverts man from his Creator. It is worthwhile to quote here Rom Landau, Professor of Islāmic and North African Studies, College of the Pacific, California:

"The arts of Islām have produced — choosing haphazardly among the great masters — neither a Phidias nor a Rembrandt, nothing comparable with Michelangelo's David or with Raphael's Madonnas. They have, in brief, given the world no great paintings or noble statues ... Moreover,

it may well be that Islām's apparent weakness is nothing less than a symptom of strength." (*Islām and the Arabs*)

### Picture agent of Pornography and Obscene "Art"

Who can deny the vital role played by photography and picture-making in the crime of pornography? Even the *Kuffaar* enact laws to protect society from the evil effects of obscene, nude and revolting pornographic pictures and images. Whatever obscenity, nudity and disgraceful acts of immorality occur around the world is brought to your door by this practice of photography. Pornography today is a rampant disease which is ever increasing among the nations of the world by leaps and bounds. This is a practice which destroys shame, modesty and it is the antithesis of Islāmic morality. This practice of pornographic or obscene "art" impels people into commission of acts of lewdness and sexual infidelity. It perverts the mind and the thinking of those who have fallen victim to it. Therefore, Islām can have no association with a practice which corrupts the morality and the spiritual well-being of man. This is thus also one of the factors which strengthen the Islāmic ban of pictures of animate objects.

### Pictures Source of Fakhr (Pride)

*Fakhr* or pride is another evil aspect which accompanies picture-making and photography. And, this disease of pride is about the worst of all spiritual diseases. Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Dehlawi (*Rahmatullah alaih*) says in *Hujjat-ul-Laahil Baalighah*:

أنها احد وجوه الادفاه والزينة فانهم كانوا يفاخرون بها

"One of the reasons for the prohibitions of pictures is the fact that the people exhibited pride in these (pictures) because of its luxury and beauty."

This element of "*Fakhr*" existing in pictures and in picture-making is likewise a cause of prohibition.

We all are aware of the fact that "*Fakhr*" or pride is the motive in most cases for people posing for photographers; for the Muslim "authority" handing over the *Halaal* Certificate and having his photograph taken in this scene; for "dignitaries" and officials desiring the publication of their pictures in the Press and magazines; for the desire to have the wedding photos taken of the bride and bridegroom with their retinue seated on the stage; and for the many other forms of pictures.

### Pictures Engender Israaf (Waste)

Colossal *Israaf* or waste of valuable time and wealthy accompany the practice of picture-making. The wealth and

time squandered in this practice of picture-making qualify the picture-makers for the following severe Divine Reprimand:

وَلَا تَبْذُرْ تَبْذِيرًا إِنَّ الْمُبْذِرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيْطَانِ ط  
وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا

"And, do not be wasteful. Verily, the wasters are the brothers of *Shaitaan*, and *Shaitaan* unto his Creator was ungrateful."

In the abovementioned verse Allah Ta'ala has likened the wasters to *Shaitaan*. Allah Ta'ala has warned and threatened us against wastefulness. We have no right to squander time and wealth in the *Shaitanic* practice of image-making which is the very antithesis of the concept of the Unity of Allah Ta'ala. Our wealth and our time must be channelled into the direction of Allah's *Deen* and not for the service of *Iblees*. Millions of rands are squandered in the picture-making, art-galleries and the host of un-Islamic products and effects attendant to this practice of picture-making of which photography is the major and most important agent today.

Even Muslims who thus far do not indulge in organised indulgence of picture-making like art and art-galleries, also squander vast sums collectively in this un-Islamic practice of photography.

Everyone is aware of the staggering amounts — thousands of rands and sometimes hundreds of thousands of rands — wasted in purchasing a single work of "art". This

indeed is the height of "Israaf" "Fakhr". For this reason it will be appropriate to brand the photographers and the picture-makers with the words of Allah, i.e., "Brothers of Shaitaan."

Regarding the element of "Israaf" existing in this practice, Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Dahlawi (*Rahmatullah alaih*) states in *Hujjat-ul-Laahil Baalighah*:

ويبدلون اموالا خطيرة فيها

"And, they (picture-makers and those who indulge in this practice) squandered enormous sums (of money) in this practice."

### Allah Ta'ala Abhors Pictures of Animate Objects

What could be a greater deterrent to a Muslim than the abhorrence of Allah Ta'ala for pictures of animate objects. Indeed that Muslim who cannot compel himself to take cognizance of the Divine Abhorrence for pictures has indeed plunged to the bottom of spiritual degradation. Most unambiguously has Allah Ta'ala stated His abhorrence for pictures of living organisms. Indeed, so emphatic are the Words of Allah as regards this practice that there exists no scope for interpretation.

The very fact that our Nabi ﷺ has described the picture-makers as the "worst-punished on the "Day of Qiyaamah", is clear proof of Allah Ta'ala's abhorrence for this practice. Ponder over the following statements of Allah and His Rasul

ﷺ — you will then realise the Divine abhorrence for pictures:

- a) Nabi ﷺ said: "Picture-makers will be the worst-punished on the Day of Qiyaamah."
- b) Allah Ta'ala will command the picture-makers on the Day of Qiyaamah: "Give life to the pictures you have made."
- c) Our Nabi ﷺ said that the picture-makers are imitators of Allah's creation of life.
- d) Nabi ﷺ said: "Every picture-maker will be in the Fire."
- e) Nabi ﷺ cursed the picture-maker.
- f) Nabi ﷺ placed the picture-maker in the category of the polytheist (*Mushrik*). See Hadith No. 13.
- g) Nabi ﷺ placed the picture-makers in the category of interest-devourers, murderer of Prophets (*Alaihimus Salām*) and murders of parents. See *Hadith* Nos. 13 and 15.
- h) Nabi ﷺ said: "Picture-makers are the worst of Allah's creation". See *Hadith* No. 15.
- i) Allah Ta'ala says in a *Hadith Qudsi*:

"Who is more unjust than the person who imitates my creation. Let him then create a grain, and let him create an atom." (Bukhari)

Yes, Allah Ta'ala has branded the picture-maker as the most unjust person.

All the aforementioned factors which have been discussed in these pages conclusively prove that pictures and picture-making are prohibited in Islām. The true and the sincere seeker after the truth will not fail to accept the conclusion that picture-making is an absolute prohibition in Islām.

By the grace of Allah Ta'ala it has been irrefutably proved that photography is picture-making. Photography is merely a way of producing pictures like the dozen of other ways of producing pictures. The Islāmic Law does not ban the camera — it does not ban photography — it bans the Pictures of Animate objects produced by the camera. There is no doubt in the fact that pictures fall in the category of *Kabaa'ir* sins or great sins. Imam Nawawi (*Rahmatullah alaih*) who is one of the great Jurists among the *Shafi Ulama* states in his *Kitāb, Sharh-ul-Muslim*:

"Our (*Shafi*) *Ulama* as well as others (i.e., *Ulama* of the other *Mazhabs*) have said that making pictures of living creatures is an absolute prohibition (*Shadeed-ut-Tahreem*). And, it is of the great sins. The *Ahadith* have threatened severe punishments for it.

#### The Prohibition was not only for the Time of Rasulallah ﷺ

Those who endeavoured to legalise this un-Islāmic practice of pictures have dared to venture the argument that the prohibition on pictures was meant only for the time of Rasulallah ﷺ as He (Nabi ﷺ) considered that the

people would revert to idolatry if this practice was permitted. This allegation is a grave falsity and a notoriety levelled against our Nabi ﷺ and Islām by the votaries of images. We demand that the propounders of this false and baseless theory state the grounds for their allegation which they have produced in substantiation for their un-Islāmic view. We cannot accept that the great *Sahabaahs* (*Radhiyallāhu 'anhum*) of our Nabi ﷺ would lapse back into idolatry. Yes, it is understandable that the modern Muslims in their state of weak *Imān* are prone to idolatry. It would have been appropriate to have said that the *Sahaba* (*Radhiyallāhu 'anhum*) could not lapse into idolatry again and that the modern Muslims exhibit every possibility of lapsing into idolatry.

1. If the prohibition was meant for only the initial stages of Islām then Rasulallah ﷺ would have abrogated the prohibition prior to His ﷺ demise. This was the case regarding the visiting of the *Qabrastaan* (graveyard). The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

كنت نهيتكم عن زيارة القبور فزوروها فانها تذكركم الآخرة.

"I forbade you from visiting the graves; Now visit them, because, verily, it reminds one about the Hereafter."  
(*Balaagh-ul-Mubeen*)

In the beginning the visiting of the graves was prohibited, but later, the prohibition was cancelled by Rasulallah ﷺ himself. The prohibition of pictures was given at the same time as the order for slaying dogs. This is



substantiated from *Hadith* No. 3 appearing in the *Ahadith* section of this booklet. However, regarding the order to slay dogs, it was cancelled after its purpose was served. Thus, Imam Nawawi (*Rahmatullah alaih*) states:

قال علمائنا انه ما يحل قتل الكلب الا اهلي اذا لم يؤذ.  
والامر بقتل الكلاب منسوخ.

"Our *Ulama* have said that it is not permissible to slay domesticated dogs when they do not cause harm. And, the order for slaying of dogs has been abrogated." (Sharh-ul-Muslim)

2. No Muslim can ever accept that it was possible for Rasulallah ﷺ to commit idolatry. Despite the total absence of the remotest possibility of idolatry as far as our Nabi ﷺ was concerned, Jibraeel ﷺ requested our Nabi ﷺ to destroy the picture which was on the screen in the house. *Hadith* No. 24 mentions this. Pictures of animals objects were abhorred whether the possibility of idolatry existed or not, as in the case of Rasulallah ﷺ it was non-existent.
3. The *Ahadith* of our Nabi ﷺ banning pictures are *Mutlaq* (مطلق). They belong to that category in *Usul-ul-Fiqh* which is described as *Mutlaq*, i.e., General — without any stipulation of conditions. And, the *Hukm* or the Effect of *Mutlaq* (مطلق) is:

المطلق يجري على اطلاقه والمقيد على تقييده

"The *Mutlaq* will remain free of the stipulation of conditions, and the *Muqayyid* will operate with its conditions."

Now, it has not been state anywhere in the *Ahadith*, nor has it been stated by any of the Jurists that the prohibition referred to only the time of Rasulallah ﷺ. Since, the *Ahadith* of our Nabi ﷺ have not fixed any conditions for this prohibition we have no authority to condition the prohibition (which is *Mutalaq*) with a condition (مقيد) — in this case the condition introduced by the votaries of picture-making is the "time-factor". Thus, the Prohibitions of Pictures will operate in its generality, and no slave of images will be permitted to stipulate any man-made conditions to it.

If the prohibition applied to only the age of Rasulallah ﷺ then surely this could not have escaped the notice of the innumerable *Fuqahaa*, *Muhadditheen* and *Ulama* throughout the history of Islām. Not a single one among the great Jurists of Islām, e.g., Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Maalik, Imam Shafi, Imam Ahmad bin Hambal (*Rahmatullahi ajmaeen*) and the thousands of other learned authorities on Islām opined that the ban on pictures was applicable to only the time of Rasulallah ﷺ. Most assuredly it is ridiculous to assume that the united opinion of the Islāmic authorities is wrong and the opinion of the modernists motivated by their whim and fancy could be right.

4. Rasulullah ﷺ said: "The makers of these pictures will be punished on the Day of *Qiyamah*. It will be said to them, "Give life to that which you have made'."

(See *Hadith No. 5*)

*Hadith No. 8*, appearing in the *Hadith* section of this booklet, states:

"Every picture-maker will be in Hell...."

Now, if we have to accept the baseless assertion of the "legalisers" of the photograph that the prohibition applied to only the age of Rasulullah ﷺ, it will follow that Rasulullah (*Sallallāhu 'alaihi wasallam*)'s warning of punishments in the Hereafter for picture-makers were mere threats. (May Allah save us from such blasphemous conclusions). This is a grave crime ventured against Rasulullah ﷺ. Rasulullah ﷺ said that every (كُلُّ) picture-maker will be in Hell-fire. The term (كُلُّ) — every — covers all picture-makes of animate objects regardless of the time or era in which they happen to exist. When someone says that only the picture-makers of Rasulullah (*Sallallāhu 'alaihi wasallam*)'s time are covered by the prohibition, and thus, the warnings of punishment sounded in the *Ahadith* are meant only for the picture-makers of Rasulullah (*Sallallāhu 'alaihi wasallam*)'s age, it will follow that he is negating Rasulullah (*Sallallāhu 'alaihi wasallam*)'s statement, viz. كل مصور (Every picture-maker) for the reason that such an assertion would be tantamount to saying, بعض مصور i.e., some picture-makers (only those of Rasulullah {*Sallallāhu 'alaihi wasallam*}'s time}). Therefore, those who are so

audacious in interpreting the *Ahadith* of Rasulullah ﷺ according to their own likes and fancies must remember that they are indirectly negating Rasulullah (*Sallallāhu 'alaihi wasallam*)'s words which amounts to rejection of the Laws of Allah Ta'ala.

5. It cannot be accepted that the prohibition applied to only the age of Rasulullah ﷺ because Allah Ta'ala Himself states in a *Hadith Qudsi* that the picture-maker is among the worst of sinners. And, *Hadith No. 7* brands the picture-maker as one who imitates the Creative Attribute of Allah Ta'ala. This element of imitating Allah's Creative Attribute exists equally in all pictures of animate objects regardless of the time in which the pictures are made. It is illogical to claim that if a picture was made yesterday it contains the element of imitating Allah Ta'ala's Creative Attribute, and if it is made today the element becomes non-existent. Therefore, it is contumacious to aver that the prohibition applied to the time of the illustrious *Sahaba* (*Radhiyallāhu 'anhum*) and that the present day Muslims who batter and buffet the *Shariah* to conform to their own dictates are exempted from the Divine Ban.
6. *Ahadith* Nos. 1 and 3 state unambiguously that the Angels do not visit homes wherein there are pictures. The *Ahadith* plainly reveal the abhorrence of the *Malai'kah* for pictures. Now, if the prohibition is qualified with the particular time of Rasulullah ﷺ it will follow that the *Malai'kah* were commanded to

remain aloof from houses containing pictures only during the period of the operation of this prohibition. In other words, the *Malai'kah's* abhorrence too was qualified with the particular age of Rasulullah ﷺ and, after the demise of Rasulullah ﷺ the order restraining the Angels was lifted. So now (according to this theory) the *Malai'kah* are free to visit times containing pictures. This theory is baseless because Jibraeel ﷺ informed our Nabi ﷺ:

"We do not enter homes wherein there are dogs or pictures."  
(*Hadith No. 3*)

These *Ahadith* stating the *Malai'kah's* dislike for pictures are also *Mutlaq* مطلق— without any time factor qualifying the Angel's dislike. It is highly improper to suggest or conclude that the Angel's dislike for pictures was a temporary phenomenon belonging to only the age of Rasulullah ﷺ. This false conclusion is the result of accepting the false reasoning of the votaries of photography of living organisms that the ban on pictures was applicable to the initial stages of Islām.

Further more, it is the height of folly (to put it mildly) to cherish the opinion that Jibraeel ﷺ and the Angels will refuse to enter in home of Rasulullah ﷺ because of the presence of a picture and enter our homes despite the profusion of pictures in our homes.

7. *Hadith No. 13* also indicates that the ban on pictures is not applicable to only the age of Rasulullah ﷺ. In this *Hadith* our Nabi ﷺ said that on the Day of

*Qiyamah* a special type of monster will emerge from Hell and torture.

- a) every rebellious aggressor (كل جبار عنيد)
- b) every person who committed *Shirk* (polytheism) (كل من دعا مع الله الها احر)
- c) all picture-makers (المصورون)

The term, *المصورون* used in the *Hadith* to describe picture-makers, is prefixed with an *Alif* and *Laam* لـ which denote "entirely", meaning "all". Should we stipulate the "time-factor" (i.e., the prohibition was only for the age of Rasulullah ﷺ) to the term, *المصورون* (all picture-makers) appearing in this *Hadith*, then it will logically follow that this "time factor" will have, of a necessity, to be stipulated to the other two types of criminals mentioned in the *Hadith* as well, viz., كل جبار عنيد (every rebellious aggressor) and كل من دعا مع الله الها احر (everyone who associates partners with Allah). This will leave us with the absurd conclusion that the punishment promised in the *Hadith* will cover only the rebellious aggressor of the time of Rasulullah ﷺ and the polytheist of the time of Rasulullah ﷺ and only the picture-maker of Rasulullah (Sallallāhu 'alaihi wasallam)'s time (according to this absurd conclusion). Nabi ﷺ delivered in this *Hadith* the warning to the three types of criminal (aggressors, polytheists, and picture-makers) in a single breadth. So just like the warning covers all aggressors and all polytheists, so does it cover all picture-makers without conditioning any one category of crime with time.

On the other hand, if we argue that the "time factor" is a stipulation of only المصورون and not of كل جبار عبيد كَلَّ من دعا مع الله الهأ آخر, then we shall say that this is an arbitrary claim based upon whimsical fancy, for there exists absolutely no legal, Islāmīc grounds for this claim. We shall demand the grounds for the stipulation of the condition of time to the one type of criminal and the negation of the same condition for the other two types of criminals mentioned in the very same *Hadith*. And, if the time-factor is stipulated for the one type of criminal (i.e., for only the picture-makers) then you cannot escape the absurd conclusion stated in the previous paragraph.

8. We cannot accept the false claim of the violators of Allah's Law that the prohibition was applicable to only the time of Rasulullah ﷺ because in *Hadith* No. 18 our Nabi ﷺ cursed the picture-makers. Thus, He ﷺ said:

"May Allah destroy those who make pictures of that which they are unable to create."

Now should someone claim that the prohibition applied to only the age of Rasulullah ﷺ, this *Hadith* will belie him because Rasulullah ﷺ qualified the picture-makers with the words: ما لا يخلقون i.e., that which they are not able to create. The Picture-makers of Rasulullah (Sallallāhu 'alaihi wasallam)'s time could not create (i.e., instil life) the pictures they made nor can the picture-makers of today or the picture-makers of tomorrow create the lifeless images they draw. Thus, the statement of Rasulullah ﷺ قوما يصورون ما لا يخلقون.

".....those who make pictures of that which they cannot create", is all-embracing. Covers all picture-makers regardless of the time or era in which they lived, are living or will live. The qualifying terms of Rasulullah ﷺ, viz., يصورون ما لا يخلقون, aptly fit all picture-makers for the simple reason that all picture-makers are unable to give life to their pictures.

9. If the claim of the supporters of the image-making had any substance in it, surely the Sahaba (Radhiyallāhu 'anhum) of Rasulullah (Sallallāhu 'alaihi wasallam)'s demise would have realised that the ban on picture-making no longer existed. But, this claim of the abrogation of the prohibition cannot be substantiated on the authority of the statements and opinions of the noble Companions. It is outrageous to claim or to infer that the Companions of Rasulullah ﷺ failed to comprehend the *Ahadith* prohibiting pictures and that they did not understand that the ban was only meant for the lifetime of Rasulullah ﷺ. And, it is an even greater intellectual dishonesty to believe that the modern Muslim who for the greater part of it is the slave of the western *Kuffar* has interpreted correctly the intentions of Rasulullah ﷺ, i.e., the modern Muslim of this twentieth century of materialistic "culture" has understood that the prohibition of pictures applied only for the age of Rasulullah ﷺ, and that the Sahaba (Radhiyallāhu 'anhum) failed to realise this.
10. If the claim of modernists was true, surely the great *Aaimma-e-Mujtahideen*, the great Jurists of Islām like

Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Shafi, Imam Maalik, Imam Ibn Hambal (*Rahmatullahi anjmaeen*) and the innumerable other learned authorities of Islām through the past fourteen centuries would have understood this. It is indeed ridiculous to aver that the modernist Muslim is correct in his interpretation of the *Ahadith* in the face of the unanimous interpretation of the vast body of Jurists. Not a single Jurist of Islām has said that the prohibition of pictures was meant only for the time of Rasulallah ﷺ. Not a single Jurist of Islām has advanced the fallacious theory that the prohibition has been abrogated.

11. For full 1400 years, i.e., right from the time of Rasulallah ﷺ to just a few years ago, this Islāmic ban on pictures and picture-making endured uncontested. For this long period of fourteen centuries the prohibition was regarded as Islāmic Law. It is only with the advent of photography that the un-Islāmic followers of the west began to contest the validity of Allah's Law prohibiting picture-making.
12. The danger of idolatry is ever-lurking. It is false to assert that Muslims of today do not practice idolatry. Many Muslims today practice idolatry in its crude and open form. Millions of Muslims the world over today indulge in the cult of grave-worship, making *Sujood* (prostration) to the graves of the *Aulia* (saints). This form of idolatry exists even right here in South Africa. Even to the present day, a sect in

India exists which worships the photograph of its *Murshid* (spiritual guide). When the late President Jamal Nasser of Egypt died, life-size pictures of him adorned the streets. People filed past in their thousands shouting, "Nasser is alive". So does idolatry set in its tentacles. When the flag of a land is displayed on the cinema screen, the law in some countries requires the audience to stand in mute silence — in idolatrous silence — in reverence of that picture. All these are symptoms and signs of the idolatrous thinking and attitude of man who has not yet been cured of his idolatrous past. It is the faithful — the followers of the *Sunnah* of Muhammad ﷺ who have no truck with such vestiges of idolatry.

Even to the present day there are million upon millions of humanity who are idolaters, believing in the crudest of anti-God idolatry. Even a great proportion of the millions of Christians are idolaters, worshipping the image and pictures of Jesus Christ — *Nabi Isa* ﷺ. And, to crown all this we state most emphatically that idolatry in its naked and raw form, i.e., worship of stone idols, will again return to the ranks of Muslims. We base our claim on the following *Hadith* of our Holy Nabi ﷺ:

لا تقوم الساعة حتى تلحق قبائل من امتي بالمشركين  
وحتى تعبد قبائل من امتي الاوثان. (ابوداود وترمذی)

"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: The Hour (*Qiyaamah*) will not come to pass until such time

that some tribes of my *Ummah* join ranks with the *Mushrikeen* (polytheists), and until such time that some tribes of my *Ummat* worship idols (*authaan*)."  
(*Abu Dawud, Tirmizi*)

عن ابي هريرة قال قال رسول الله ﷺ: لا تقوم الساعة حتى تضطرب البات نساء دوس حول ذى الخلصة وذو الخلصة طاغية دوس التي كانوا يعبدون في الجاهلية.  
(بخارى ومسلم)

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The Hour will not come to pass until such time that the buttocks of the women of the tribe of Dous move around *Zul-Khalasah*."

"And, *Zul-Khalasah* is the name of the idol which the tribe of Dous worshipped during the Times of Ignorance."  
(*Bukhari, Muslim*)

عن عائشة قالت سمعت رسول الله ﷺ يقول لا يذهب الليل والنهار حتى يُعبد اللات والعزى.  
(مسلم)

Hazrat A'isha (*Radhiyallāhu 'anha*) narrates that she heard Rasulullah ﷺ say: 'Night and day will not cease (i.e., *Qiyaamah* will not occur) until such time that *Laat* and *Uzza* are worshipped'....."  
(*Muslim*)

*Laat* is the name of the idol-god of the tribe of *Thakeef*, and *Uzza* that of *Ghatfaan*.

Therefore, the claim that the prohibition of pictures applied only to the idolatrous past is highly fallacious and misleading. Idolatry exists around us and will assume

predominance in the future according to the prediction of our Nabi ﷺ.

13. Among certain sects you will find that pictures of Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه, Imam Hassan and Imam Hussain (*Radhiyallāhu 'anhuma*) adorning their homes and Mosques. Reverence which is tantamount to image-worship is accorded to these pictures. Today this idolatrous reverence is treated may be as respect, but tomorrow this self-same respect and reverence will be transformed into idolatry. It will never come as a surprise should these sects construct idols and statues of Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه and worship them. In the beginning pictures of Hazrat Ibraheem رضي الله عنه and Hazrat Ismael رضي الله عنه were used as objects of remembrance. Later these were transformed into deities by the followers of *Iblees*.

For the abovementioned reasons which we have outlined, the sincere seeker of the truth must realise that the claim of the modernist regarding the cancellation of the prohibition of pictures is highly false and destructive to one's *Imān*.

### The Abhorrence of Pictures not Restricted to Muslims

Even non-Muslims, centuries, and millenia ago were averse to pictures of animate objects and images as they too accepted that these constituted the basis of all anti-God forms of worship. The Encyclopaedia International states:







### Consensus of Opinion — Jurists of Islām on the Prohibition

The verdicts and the opinions of the *Fuqahaa* on this question are indeed sufficient proof for the sincere Muslims. The interpretations given to the *Ahadith* of our Nabi ﷺ by the great authorities of Islām are sufficient to act as guidance for the seeker after the truth. The unanimous verdict of the great and true learned scholars of Islām will belie the false theories and baseless interpretations of the followers of the desires. Now read on and realise the truth from the statements of the true Representatives of Rasulullah ﷺ, viz., the *Fuqaha*.

Imam Nawawi (*Rahmatullah alaih*) states:

"Our Ulama as well as other among the *Ulama* said that the portrayal of pictures of living creatures is *Haraam* — an absolute prohibition. And, it is among the great sins. It (picture-making) is a practice against which severe warnings of punishments have been issued in the *Ahadith* mentioned..... therefore, the making of pictures is *Haraam* (forbidden) in every manner because in it is the imitation of Allah Ta'ala's creation.

This is the summary of our *Mazhab* (i.e., the *Shafi Mazhab*). And, the overwhelming majority of the *Ulama* among the *Sahaba* (*Radhiyallāhu 'anhum*), the *Tā'abieen* and those after them has

opined likewise. This is also the *Mazhab* of Imam Thauri, Imam Abu Hanifah (*Rahmatullah alaihum*) and others.

Imam Zuhri (*Rahmatullah alaih*) has said that the prohibition of pictures is general (i.e., without any conditions qualifying the prohibition). The same applies to the use of items having pictures on them, and entry into homes having pictures in them....

This {says Imam Nawawi (*Rahmatullah alaih*)} is the strong (i.e., well substantiated) opinion.

The *Ulama* have said that the reason for the prohibition of pictures is because these are open and evil sin, and, in them is the imitation of Allah Ta'ala's creation (i.e., Attribute of Creative Power); and, some among these are worshipped besides Allah.

And, these *Ahadith* are categoric in the prohibition of pictures of living creatures. And, verily, it is a very stringent prohibition.

He who does not intend the worship of the pictures, nor imitating Allah Ta'ala's creation is, nevertheless, a *Faasiq* (an open and rebellious sinner); he is the perpetrator of a great sin...."

(*Sharh-ul-Muslim* of Imam Nawawi)

"Ibn Hajar Makki Haitami (*Rahmatullah alaih*) says in his *Kitāb, Azzwaajir Aniktiraaf-il-*

*Kabaa'ir*: The making of pictures of living objects on anything whatsoever is a *Kabira* (great) sin. The authentic *Ahadith* state so clearly.

The making of picture of living objects is Haraam without any condition stipulated to it.

(*At-Ta'leeq-ul-Mumajjad Alaa Muatta* Imam Muhammad)

Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Dahlawi (*Rahmatullah alaih*) states:

"The abhorrence of the Angels for pictures is necessary because in pictures the meaning of idols has been established, and it is a fact that from the realms above descend wrath and curses upon idols and their worshippers. When mankind is resurrected on the Day of *Qiyaamah* the pictures of the picture-maker will be given life. His pictures will assume the forms he had in mind at the time he made these. This will be so because it is most appropriate for him because he (the picture-maker) endeavours to the best of his ability to represent his imagination in the form of these pictures. Thus, these will assume the forms of hardship, i.e., he will be required to instil life in the pictures, and he will not be able to do so."

(*Hujjat-ul-Lahil Baalighah*)

"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said that it is not permissible for me or a Prophet to enter a house decorated with pictures.

Since the making of pictures and the wearing of clothing having pictures on them are forbidden, it follows that homes adorned with pictures should be shunned."

(*Hujjat-ul-Lahol Baalighah*)

"The *Shariah* has declared picture-making as being absolutely forbidden (*Haraam Qat'i*), and the use of pictures forbidden as well."

(Mufti Muhammad Shafi, Grand Mufti of Pakistan)

"It is not permissible to make pictures of animate objects as well as of such inanimate objects which are worshipped, like the cross. The *Ahadith* have severely denigrated the picture-maker."

(*Fatawa Rahimiya*)

Shaikh Mustafaa Hamaami (*Rahmatullah alaih*) of Egypt writes:

"Shaikh Nawawi (*Rahmatullah alaih*)'s statement clearly indicate that *Ijma'* (Consensus of Opinion of the Jurists) is recorded on the prohibition of pictures of living creatures. There exists no difference of opinion on this score among the Ulama of Islām.....

Shaikh Ibn Arabi (*Rahmatullah alaih*) said that the prohibition extends over all pictures. Imam Aini (*Rahmutullah alaih*) states in *Sharh-ul-Bukhari*: 'It is recorded in *Taudheeh* that our *Ulama* as well as other *Ulama* have said that the making of pictures of living objects is *Haraam*, and this practice is a *Kabira* (great) sin, because

in this practice is the imitation of Allah's creation. Pictures of animate objects, whether these are on cloth, carpets, coins, utensils, walls, are all *Haraam*.... Imam Malik, Imam Thauri, Imam Abu Hanifah (*Rahmutallah ajmaeen*) and other groups of Jurists as well hold the same view'."

Shaikh Hamaami (*Rahmatullah alaih*) futher adds:

"Imam Aini (*Rahmatullah alaih*) has accepted the *Ijma'* on this prohibition recorded by Imam Nawawi (*Rahmatullah alaih*). Imam Aini (*Rahmatullah alaih*) is one of the *Hanafi* Jurists...

Imam Zuhri (*Rahmatullah alaih*) says that the prohibition of picture-making is general (not qualified with any conditions). Similarly the use of an object which has pictures on it is forbidden. And, it is not permissible to enter a house which contains pictures. This *Mazhab* of Imam Zuhri (*Rahmatullah alaih*) is the strong *Mazhab* (i.e., well substantiated with proofs).

I taken an oath by Allah (says Shaikh Hamaami) that I incline towards the view of Imam Zuhri (*Rahmatullah alaih*). By the grace of Allah I have probed and established this matter throughly. When picture-making is forbidden, the logical conclusion is that use of pictures is likewise forbidden."

"Shaikh Makki (*Rahmatullah alaih*) states in *Hidayah*: 'I cannot recall that a single *A'alim* has said that pictures are lawful."

"Shaikh Abu Hayyaan (*Rahmatullah alaih*) says that *Ijma'* exists on the prohibition of pictures. He has stated emphatically that those who have said that pictures are permissible are not among the *Ulama*."

Commenting on this statement of Shaikh Abu Hayyaan (*Rahmatullah alaih*), Shaikh Mustafaa Hamaami (*Rahmatullah alaih*) of Egypt says:

"I have no hesitation in supporting Shaikh Abu Hayyaan (*Rahmatullah alaih*) on this score. I am astonished and amazed when even an ordinary Muslim (i.e., non-*A'alim*) says that pictures are lawful despite the fact that many authentic *Ahadith* of our Nabi ﷺ have branded this practice of pictures as a *Kabira* sin."

"Those who are so audacious in this practice of picture should heed well the warnings in the *Ahadith* that on the Day of *Qiyaamah* in Hell, life will be created in all the animate pictures produced. These will then torture the picture-makers. What greater chastisement could there be?"

(Extracted from *Bayyinaat* of Shaikh-ul-Hadith Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Yusuf Binnoori)

"Picture are generally worshipped by the idolaters, and are therefore detested by the Angels, as well as despised by the Prophet ﷺ. The makers of them will be duly punished on the Day of Resurrection because they are the cause of providing base for idolatry .... It is therefore, necessary to take the pictures out of good houses, as impure things, and then the Prophet ﷺ will be pleased with you, and your house will be entered by the Angels; and thus there will be blessings all over it. Hence the crime of making pictures is very great, greater than that of Yazid and Shumar...." (Mujaddid, Hazrat Maulana

Ismail Shaheed, in *Taqwiyat-ul-Imān*)

Imam Shafi (*Rahmatullah alaih*) states:

"And, if one sees pictures of living creatures in the premises where one has been invited to, one should not enter that place. ....Verily, it is forbidden to make pictures of objects which have life in them....." (Kitab-ul-Umm of Imam Shaafi)

## Conclusion

The afore-going discussion conclusively proves that picture-making of which photography is one of the methods, is prohibited in Islām. The *Shariah* does not allow this idolatrous and evil practice. All methods of picture-production are condemned and all the methods fall equally

under the Islāmic ban. All methods of picture-making fall within the category of *Kabira* or great sins. The very fact that our Nabi ﷺ has coupled the picture-maker with murderers of prophets and parents, polytheists, etc., shows to what level of abhorrence Allah Ta'ala has assigned this practice. The Angel's abhorrence for pictures further displays the abhorrence of pictures in the Eyes of Allah. Allah Ta'ala's description of the picture-maker as the "most unjust person" clinches this argument, and leaves no scope whatsoever to the wavering and doubtful mind. Every sincere Muslim — every true believer will have to put aside his fancy and his reasoning and accept the immutable Divine Law of Allah Ta'ala that Pictures of Living Creatures are Strictly Prohibited by the *Shariah* of Islām.

It is absolutely shocking to witness that Muslims of today not only indulge profusely and freely in this practice, but they are exhibiting the effrontery and rebellion to declare as lawful this practice of picture-making which Allah Ta'ala and His Rasul ﷺ have proscribed — banned and slated in unmistakable terms.

The Muslim public must not be misled and hoodwinked by the "logical" and "reasoning" processes of the modernists of today. Muslims should bear in mind that through this long corridor of Islām's fourteen centuries the Jurists of Islām — the great and noble Representative of Rasulullah ﷺ — have passed an unanimous verdict on this question of picture-making. They have all passed the verdict that Pictures are *Haraam*.



We pray that Allah Ta'ala save all Muslims from the blasphemy and mischief of those who seek to subvert this Deen of Islām, A'ameen.

### The Blasphemy of Pictures

The institution of photography, and when we speak of photography we imply thereby photos and pictures of animate objects, has been the cause for many of the ills and vices ailing humanity. Hence, to brand this practice as an important cause of crime is no understatement. Let us examine just how this institution of photography presents itself as an agent of vice and crime.

Islām has prohibited the drawing of pictures or photos of anything living in the most stringent terms. The Islāmic ban on photography is saturated with wisdom the philosophy of which the western educated Muslims fail to comprehend because of the superficial nature of their knowledge. Besides knowing practically zero of Islām their knowledge of human life as well is negligible.

Primarily the drawing of pictures was, in and will always be the most important cause of *idolatry*. Idolatry traces its origin in this practice of drawing pictures. Picture-making provides the most fertile soil for *Shirk* (association of other created beings with Allah Almighty, in worship). Since time immemorial man has tried to represent the Almighty Creator in pictures according to the peculiar and popular image and idea prevailing at his time. Thus, a Hindu god is sometimes drawn with innumerable hands. The *Hindu* mind

was incapable of comprehending the lofty nature of a Supreme, Transcendent, All-Powerful Creator defying substance and imagination, hence to his mind it was essential for a being to be in possession of countless hands in order to manage the affairs of the universe and execute the multitude of activities attendant to it. Then again we see God appearing in the form of some kind of monstrous beast. And again we see Him depicted as a kind old man with a long white beard. Thus in a multitude of different shapes and forms God Almighty has been represented. Needless to say, all this amounts to an insult to the glory and grandeur of His majesty, Lord of the Worlds.

The conception of Goodhood is indeed lofty, most high in Islām. He defies all description, is beyond all definition. Man's mind being limited can never hope of comprehending that Great Being completely. How can something finite comprehend that which is infinite? The myriads of various kinds of pictures which have appeared purporting to be the image of that Great All Pervading Power has belittled and reduced that lofty concept of Godhood to a level of myth and folklore. These blasphemous pictures depicting the Almighty Allah as a Being subject to all the weaknesses to be found in creatures, have served only to derogate the glory of Allah. Because of these preposterous pictures conveying a ridiculous and fallacious image of the Almighty Creator many people were and are at a loss and are unable to distinguish between Creator and creature. Indeed in many cases God has been depicted as a greater weakling than man. A smattering knowledge of Hinduism, Greek Mythology and Buddhism bears ample proof to substantiate this allegation.

It is this practice of picture-drawing which has degraded man to such a base level of worshipping the very objects which are a creation of his hands. Undeniably it is because of this institution of picture-drawing that idolatry has taken such an iron grip upon humanity. Undoubtedly it is because of this institution that man has thrown over-board the glorious concept of monotheism to indulge in the most rebellious ways of polytheisms and paganism. And, in the wake of idolatry there ensued some of the worst and most heinous crimes. History is cluttered with horrid and brutal deeds of murder, rapine, and sexual lust, all perpetrated in the name of the religion of idolatry which has for its parent the institution of picture-making. It is impossible to go into detail as regards the havoc spread by idolatry. Suffice to mention here that the bestial and evil consequences of idolatry which has its roots in picture-drawing has and is still causing untold misery to millions upon millions of humans fettered to the religion of idol-worship.

To remove and eliminate a tree it is essential to cut at its very roots. No purpose will be served by lopping at the leaves or branches. Hence, in order to rid humanity of this all-embracing evil of idolatry, Islām has struck at the very roots of this practice. To eradicate idolatry it was most essential to strike at and obliterate the very basic cause of idol-worship which is nothing but the institution of picture-drawing. Photography is the latest method of picture-production. Islām has in no dubious terms banned pictures of animate objects whether they assume the form of drawing or photos or any other means of picture-production. Islām cannot tolerate even a semblance of idolatry.

Besides this great crime of idolatry, a host of other evils are the direct products of photography. Photography gave birth to pornography. The devastating effect which pornography has on the morality of man is too well known for elaboration. It corrupts and degenerates the sense of values. It stimulates the carnal desires of man which lead to the commission of some of the vilest sex-crimes. Many are the cases of revolting sexual offences which had their seeds sown in the mind by the lustful observance of pornography. Nude, and semi-nude pictures of girls appearing daily in newspapers excite lust for carnal gratification. The baser carnal attributes which should remain in fetters are aroused by these revealing, immodest, sexy and pornographic photographs. By the daily observance of these ugly pictures the mind of the young becomes permeated with sex, and a time comes when sex is his sole concern. Hence, it is to be seen today that sordid sex is an obsession in the west.

Then there is the role photography plays in the fostering of cinema which will be discussed later.

In support of the claim that Islām has banned photography of animate objects we advance some *Ahadith* of the Noble Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

1. Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported: The Prophet ﷺ said: Jibraeel عليه السلام came to me and said, "I had been to you last night also, but could not enter your house because of three things. There were pictorial inscriptions on the door. The screen inside had pictures too. Further there was a dog inside the house. Cut away the head

of the picture on the door, so that the remaining portion resembles that of a tree. Tear off the screen inside the house into pieces and convert them into cushions lying about the floor and coming under human feet. And, eject the dog." (Mishkāt)

2. Hazrat A'isha (Radhiyallāhu 'anha) reported the Prophet ﷺ said, "On the Day of Reckoning the hardest of all chastisements will be for those who desire to imitate Allah Almighty's aspects of creation (to shape things like living organisms)." (Mishkāt)
3. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Verily the maker of pictures will be punished on the Day of Resurrection when Allah will desire them to bring to life their pictures." (Mishkāt)
4. Again, "Verily, a house which contains pictures is not visited by the angels." (Mishkāt)
5. Ibn Abbas ؓ related: the Prophet ﷺ said, "Surely that person shall be most severely punished who has killed a Prophet, or who has been killed by a Prophet, or who has murdered his parents or has made a picture, or a learned man who has derived no benefit by his learning." (Mishkāt)

From the foregoing *Ahadith* it is abundantly clear that Islām is explicit and categoric in its rejection of photography of animate objects. No sincere Muslim dare advance an opinion to the contrary, and indeed no Muslim has the authority to attempt the legalisation of a practice which the Great Messenger of Allah ﷺ has declared unlawful.

Muslims who have enslaved themselves to the western concept of life are at pains to explain away these *Ahadith* in a futile and vain attempt to legalise the institution of photography. In order to gratify their whimsical fancies and to appear modern and "educated" in the eyes of their western masters these Muslims are juggling in vain to interpret the sayings of the Prophet ﷺ to conform to the demands of western "progress". But, let them know that all their jugglery will not secure their desired object of introducing their fancies as Law in Islām. The Law of Islām is incontrovertible, and there will be that band of believers who will oppose them and expose their falsity and hollowness.

The main arguments which these modern oppologists advance to bolster their baseless claim that Islām permits the institution of photography are:

1. That the *Ahadith* prohibiting picture-making were meant only for the pagan Arabs of the Prophet's time because at that time idolatry was rampant.
2. That Photos are not pictures.

Needless to say, these arguments are faracious and entirely misleading. On what authority do the votaries of westernism claim that the ban applied to only the Arabs of the Prophet's time? Who has empowered these western slaves to abrogate any of the Laws of Islām? Without fear of contradiction it can be claimed that the supporters of photography cannot substantiate their assertion that the prohibition was meant only for the Arabs of centuries ago.

The second argument is even more absurd than the first. It is a downright stupid and senseless claim which may only delude the ignorant. According to the Oxford Dictionary which undoubtedly is a great authority for western minds, the definition of the term photograph is given thus:

"A picture taken by means of the chemical action of light on a sensitive film."

This definition of the term photograph leaves on scope for doubt. To say that a photograph is not a picture is to echo deliberate ignorance with the intention of misleading the ignorant and unwary. There are various methods of producing pictures, and photography is one of the latest means of picture-production.

Another even flimsier argument put forward is that the image in a mirror and the image of the photograph is one and the same thing. Hence, according to the supporters of this practice, if photo are to be forbidden then looking in the mirror should likewise be declared illegal. Man will, in order to satisfy his whims and fancies put forth the most ridiculous of pretexts to support even a naked wrong. They blatantly deny the incontrovertible fact that pictures and photos are the same, but they are audacious enough to assert that photos and the mirror-image are the same.

There is a basic difference between the image of the photo and the image in the mirror. The images in the mirror is a temporary phenomenon, the existence of which is entirely dependant upon the presence of the object. Once the object is removed from the presence of the mirror the

image ceases to exist. Whereas the image produced on the photograph is permanent. The removal of the object or instrument of production does not efface the image. This important difference between the two instruments — the camera and the mirror — makes the image of the camera, i.e., the photo, a picture, and not the image of the mirror a picture. It is this distinguishing nature of Permanance which renders the photo as illegal in Islām. The image of the mirror will fade away into oblivion. The image of the photograph will remain to tell the tale of idolatry, pornography, crime and evil.

The Home University Encyclopedia defines Photography thus:

"Photography is the art of preparing permanent representations of objects by means of the light they emit or transmit."

This important attribute of "permanence" of photography or picture-making is the root cause of idolatry. The very word idolatry is derived from the Greek term, eidolon, meaning "image" and lateria meaning "worship". And it is only the picture-image and not the mirror-image which has played such an important role in this heinous religion of idolatry.

The Home University Encyclopedia has this to say regarding pictures and images:

"The graven image and the picture have had their part in the development of the church worship

of mediaeval and modern Christianity, chiefly as aids to religious contemplation and devotion. Reformed churches do not permit their use, but the Lutheran still admit of images by way of ornament, or as helpful to devotion."

This then is the Islāmīc view of photography of animate objects. The superficial arguments advanced by the supporters of photography can never be beneficial to those who desire to know and practise Islām in its true form and in its intrinsic simplicity. A more deeper investigation into the Islāmīc ban of pictures is required than the mere superficial props put up in favour of this practice. The wisdom underlying this Islāmīc ban will only be comprehended and appreciated by those who possess a true and sincere desire to know Islām as Islām. As for those who hanker after the false glitter of westernisation and attempt to subvert the teachings of Islām, all the convincing arguments will be of no avail.

### Why Picture of Animate Objects Have Been Prohibited

#### *Objects of Prohibition*

The Holy Prophet ﷺ was commissioned by the Almighty to eradicate idolatry, root and branches, from the world. Previously, prophets were raised who preached the unity of Allah. As each prophet passed away, his followers took some form of idolatry. For instance, the followers of

Moses (Musa ﷺ) took a calf for worship. The followers of Jesus Christ (Isa ﷺ) introduced images in their churches. The Protestant vehemently protested and established different churches, abolishing all images therefrom. They, however, upheld Trinity as opposed to unity, bidding good-bye to pure monotheism preached by Jesus. The Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ came to purge the evils from the old truths and introduced new ones conformable to the new society. Therefore perceiving the baneful effect that pictures and images would have on his followers in future, he abolished them wholesale. He demolished the tree of idolatry as well as eradicated its possible roots from Islām. This is one of the reasons why live-pictures have been made unlawful. The second reason is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ prohibited mourning the death of a man for more than three days. If there is a picture of a dead family member near someone, it will give him constant mental anxieties and sorrows, thereby making him indifferent and incapable of active work. The third thing to be noticed is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ whose principles are now shining in full glory after 14 centuries has not established this law without any rhyme or reason. The reasons given above may not extend so far as to those of the Prophet ﷺ. These are after all comparatively quite insignificant. Only Allah and His Apostle know best about the reasons. Taking the opposite view, it is evident that if pictures were allowed in Islām, the result would have been disastrous to the cause of perfection of the unity of Allah. Pictures of saints, prophets and holy men of Islām and other religions would have been hung up in mosques, houses, in the Prophet's mosque at Madinah



"It (Islām) frowns severely upon certain forms of self-indulgence and sensuality to which the West has given the imposing label of 'Fine Arts'. Some of these are dancing, painting and photography (of living beings) and sculpture."

(Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi  
Present Rector of Darul Uloom,  
Nadwat-ul-Ulema, Lucknow, India)

### Photography

Extract from an interesting dialogue between  
Maulana Abdul Aleem Siddiqui and  
George Bernard Shaw in 1934)

"Sooth to say, I myself am strictly orthodox and identify myself with that section which refuses to countenance the slightest alteration in the teaching of Islām. The words of this tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, viz., that 'He who interprets the Qur'ān according to his own opinion should be prepared to accommodate himself in Hell', are indelibly impressed on my mind. I am of those who try to act in conformation with the precepts of the least significance. For instance, my companion, Mr. Ali Muhammad Jaffer, had taken a photographer with him, as he proposed to have a picture of our meeting, but I refused point blank to accede to his request, and sent back the photographer, for I know that pictures have led to idol-worship, and those of my admirers who today manifest their affection in this manner might perhaps be carried away by misconceived fervour

and begin to adore my photo, and ultimately worship it. For this reason I never give permission to take my picture, and if anyone takes it without my knowledge the responsibility is his. I have said all this so that you may now be able to gauge properly the extent to which I must be orthodox, where the main principles of Islām are concerned, when I am so cautious regarding such a point of detail which in the opinion of some modern ultra-rationalistic Muslims is permissible."

Maulana Abdul Aleem Siddiqui